

An Essay
on Scarlatina
Respectfully Submitted
to the
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Pennsylvania
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Scarlatina

The term "Scarlatina" which is of modern origin and said to have been introduced into medical nomenclature by Sydenham is employed to designate a disease, the general characters of which consist in fever, usually preceding, by a day or two, the appearances of a scarlet efflorescence of the skin and of the mucus membrane of the mouth and fauces with inflammation of the throat in most cases; the eruption terminating by desquamation towards the end of the first week — The rash is slightly elevated above the skin and disappears on pressure and leaves a white imprint which almost immediately disappears.

In the present day we seldom meet with it in this simple form, but more frequently complicated with

severe or ulcerated sore throat, delirium, congestion or violent inflammatory symptoms, and often with more or less deviation from the characteristic efflorescence above described—

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Scarlatina occurs under three distinct forms—Simple, Anginose, & Malignant.

Scarlatina Simplex

The precursory symptoms of this form are general debility, nausea, shiverings followed by flushes of heat and thirst—On the second day of the febrile symptoms, little points, at first of a light red, then becoming deeper, appear in great numbers on the face, neck, and chest—In the course of twenty four hours, similar spots appear on the body, lips, tongue, palate and pharynx—On the third

day most of the interstices which had been left are covered with large dotted patches having serrated edges - In this stage the pulse is full, and very quick, and frequent, the tongue is covered with a creamy coat, through which the red and elevated papillae appear producing a characteristic appearance of the organ - The skin is much hotter in this form of exanthema than in any other -

The scarlet colour is of a deeper tint on the groins, buttocks, and folds of the joints than in other situations -

About the fifth day, the interstices between the patches become larger, the scarlet colour less vivid, and slight desquamation from the surface of the hands, feet, & the different regions of the body takes place -

Scarletina Anginosa

This form is characterized by the accompa-

nying inflammation of the throat; it commences with more intense fever and a sense of stiffness of the neck and inferior maxilla —

On the second day, the pharynx is inflamed deglutition is difficult, the amygdalae become swollen and the mucous membrane presents a vivid red appearance — In the Scarlatina simplex the pharynx presents an erythematous blush, but there is no effusion; in this form however a quantity of thick viscid fluid, sometimes of a whitish-yellow colour, but more generally caseous-like matter, is thrown out on the amygdalae, pharynx & anterior pillars of the velum — During the second, third, and fourth days, symptoms of gastro-enteritis are present; the tongue is of a bright red colour; there is nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, or constipation, dry cough, quick and vibrating pulse, and occasionally epistaxis — The eruption, which appears on the third day, is

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not so generally or equally distributed as in the former affection — It also sometimes disappears suddenly, frequently on the ~~day~~ after its appearance, and returns again after an uncertain period of time — The entire duration of this form is longer than in simple scarlet fever, and its order of appearance and that of its disquamation, are not so regular, and still more dangerous —

Scarlatina Maligna

This form comes on like the *Scarlatina anginosa*, except that the symptoms are of a graver type even on the first ~~accessions~~.

Sometimes, in fact, the patient is stricken dead by the poison in a very few hours before any eruption or local symptoms come on — The throat affection is however usually very prominent — The eruption does not present a scarlet appearance, but is more of a livid hue & frequently interspersed with

petechiae — It is irregular in its first appearance, but it may disappear and reappear several times — In this form of *Scarlatina* the pulse is small and irregular, the teeth and tongue are covered with brown or black incrustations, the eyes are much injected, and the vision is confused; the respiration is laborious and the breath is fetid; the pharynx is covered with thick, viscid mucosity and there is often sloughing of the surface of the amygdalae — Convulsions and coma are frequent concomitants of this affection in children, while delirium and deafness attend this form in the adult.

The appearance of numerous petechiae, diarrhoea, difficult respiration, or of persistent coma, announce the approach of death —

Scarlatina, can scarcely be confounded with any disease except measles, but the difference between them are well pronounced and when

once pointed out, are easily enough recognized, first by the presence at the outset, of catarrhal symptoms - by sneezing, cough, disfluxion from the eyes and nose which precede the rash - There is doubtless in many cases of scarlatina a running from the eyes and nose - but not till late in the disease at any rate not prior to the eruptions - Second, by the absence of severe inflammation and ulceration of the throat; symptoms which always accompany severe cases of scarlet fever - Third by the character of the eruption itself - The rash in measles is more elevated above the surface than in scarlatina and of a darker hue or colour - In measles it is said to present somewhat the tint of a raspberry and in scarlet fever to be that of a boiled lobster - There is a strong tendency in the serous membranes, to become morbidly implicated in scarlatina, and to the generally

serious nature of those affections—In certain epidemics, and in sporadic cases likewise, attacks of inflammation of the mucus membranes—as of the bronchial tubes, stomach and intestines—occur, the latter not infrequently putting on the form of pellicular or diphtheritic inflammation—It has, also, been remarked, that effusions of fatal tendency occasionally take place into the larger joints—Gangrene of the extremities likewise occurs, at times. One of the most serious sequelae is anasarca, appearing in the face, eyelids and lower extremities; and, not infrequently, becoming general. Dropsy may, likewise, exist in the different serous cavities. In some epidemics, this sequela has been found more serious than the primary disease, whilst, by others, it has been regarded as an affection of no great importance.

Pericarditis—is thought by some to be com-

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plicated with Scarlatina, and it is probable
that the affections of the joints, resembling rheu-
matism, that occur in Scarlatina would be
frequently found to be associated with pericar-
ditis, if attention were closely directed to the
heart — Simple Scarlatina, occurring
in a healthy individual, is a disease de-
void of danger; yet danger may arise from
the superovention of hyperaemia, and this has
always to be borne in mind — It is often
indicated by the sudden recession of the erup-
tion, as well as by its tardy or irregular appear-
ance — A benign case occasionally, too, assu-
mes rapidly all the characteristics, of the congestive
or malignant variety — The extent of the
pharyngeal inflammation marks, in a measure,
the severity of the disease in the anginous and
malignant varieties; when this is slight, the
danger is less; but if the tumefactions and
difficulty of deglutition be very great, the dan-

ger is less; but if the tumefaction and difficulty of deglutition be very great, the danger is in proportion — The same may be said of the gastro-enteritic, pleuritic, and meningitic affections, all of which are very serious complications.

It need scarcely be said, that in all cases of Scarlatina Maligna, the prognosis should be of the most guarded kind — In certain epidemics too, the disease is more fatal than in others — The glands of the neck sometimes inflame and suppurate, so as to occasion great destruction of parts; and, at times, the tumours press upon the larynx so that the patient dies under all the symptoms of suffocation —

Scarlatina has been observed to affect puerperal more readily than pregnant women — The sequelae of scarlatina are, anasarca, ophthalmia, otitis, bronchitis, enteritis, orchitis, and tonsillitis in adults; abscesses of the sub-maxillary

and parotid glands, &c. in children.

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When the disease appears in its simple form, the skin presenting the characteristic hue with a smooth and glossy surface and even in the severe forms of scarlatina when the throat is considerably affected (exhibiting the anginous form) and high fever or congestive symptoms set in and which, if not properly treated, or if they occur in a bad habit of body, may assume the malignant type, attended with ulcerated sore throat, extension of the inflammation to the air-passages, delirium, spasm &c. Belladonna is the remedy to which we should attach the greatest importance — Belladonna I regard as a specific in scarlatina assuming the simple form — Should there be high fever, assuming clearly the inflammatory type, skin dry, frequent and full pulse; congestion to

the head, with puffed face, vertigo and
dizziness; or delirium; or lethargy, or waking
with a start; dry, short, painful cough; bleu-
ding at the nose, or also spitting blood; inflam-
mation of the throat, colic, with bilious vom-
iting I would give aconite, alternating it
with Belladonna - Should restlessness
supervene or sleepiness - with an inabil-
ity to sleep Coffea should be given -
Should the disease take a favorable turn
we may allow the Belladonna to act, but
should the inflammation of the throat
and amygdalae increase instead of di-
minish as is frequently the case in Strumous
constitutions, or if we clearly perceive an ap-
pearance of ulceration commencing,
with increase of mucus we must have
immediate recourse to Mercurius. But
if on the other hand, the ulcer present
a livid appearance about the edges,

and emit an offensive odor, or, when there is excessive thirst, with great dryness of the mouth, and extreme prostration of strength, we must have recourse to Arsenicum in preference to Mercurius; and if this medicine prove inadequate to complete the cure, we should follow it with Lachesis. Carb. Veg. Rhus. Ammon. Carb. Acid. Phos. Baryta &c.

Scor. Tormentilla, and Pulsatilla, are moreover, of considerable efficacy, when a large quantity of viscid mucus is secreted from the inflamed and tumefied lining of the fauces, which adheres so tenaciously, that it is with difficulty expelled, and, sometimes, even threatens suffocation.

Opium - may follow the administration of Belladonna, when there is burning heat of the skin, drowsiness, stupor, stertorous breathing, open mouth, eyes half closed,

restlessness with vomiting, or convulsions.

Many are of the opinion that Cuprum Aceticum is particularly efficacious and even specific in a peculiar affection of the brain, that frequently declares itself in cases of supercussed exanthemata, and which if not speedily checked, may terminate in paralysis of that organ — Symptoms indicating its employment are quick, small, weak, irregular pulse; temperature of the body and skin considerably reduced, in more severe cases, chilly, and covered with perspirations —

Affections of the nervous system are never absent; to this belong convulsive movements of various parts of the body, distortion of the eyes, face, mouth, head &c. Spasmodic affections of the chest, sometimes even eclampsia; as well as great restlessness, frequent change of position, sopor, delirium, &c.

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It displays its efficacy in reproducing the eruption, when the cerebral affection disappears, and the disease runs its usual course.

Zincum — should be used in repeated doses when complete or partial sopor, pulse collapsed, small, and quick, restless delirium, unconsciousness, extremities cold, body cool, whole cutaneous surface bluish-red, except about the eyes forehead and chin, these parts being white, the eruption remaining but scantily, retention of urine, &c. symptoms indicating or indication of paralysis of the brain — Zinc — seems to ^{have} the power to strengthen the whole system particularly the brain and nervous system and restore it to a normal state —

Calc. Carb. is also highly recommended by some, especially when the disease affects the organs of the chest and is said to be for those organs what Zinc. is for the brain —

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Pulsatilla is indicated, when derangement of the stomach and digestion is a prominent symptom, the face pale, red, or bloated; also constipation - or looseness especially at night - occasionally with pains in the bowels, and shivering; disposition fretful and sensitive, or melancholy - When the eruption becomes very intense, and extends over the entire frame, and particularly when the patient affected is of the strumous diathesis, Sulphur in repeated doses is well indicated - Aconite as an intermediate remedy after Sulphur when great restlessness and dry heat of skin prevail - The accession of Laryngitis is one of the most serious and fatal complications which is liable to be encountered in scarlet fever - The remedies on which we must chiefly rely when we detect this dangerous state of matters, are, Aconite, Spongia, Hyposulphur, Lachesis, Mercurius Arsenicum, Carb. V. & C.

17 Chamomilla - may be employed with advantage, either alone, or alternately with Belladonna, against excoriation of the face &c. - Aurum - against the offensive and purulent discharge from the nose, with soreness and swelling of the interior.

Dropical swelling of the whole body is not an unfrequent sequela, sometimes requiring a most careful and discriminating treatment - The following remedies will generally be found the best adapted to the successful treatment of the same.

Kali-borus, Arsenicum, Bryonia Rhis. Tox, Apis. Mel.; of these Kali-borus and Apis, I have found generally the most appropriate, when the whole body has become suddenly anasarcaous: Rhis. Tox. when the inferior extremities are more especially affected and Arsenicum, when Kali-borus does not speedily produce

a favorable improvement—

Bryonia has been recommended as the best remedy when the dropsical infiltration detected early, and the effused fluid is small in quantity, but I never have found any very beneficial effect to result from its use, at that stage of the disease — In obstinate cases

Arnica, Belladonna, Rhus, Acid, Digitalis, Baryta, M. Sulphur & Lycopodium will be as well or better indicated than almost any other remedies —

Against Otitis, Belladonna, Hepar, Sulph., or Pulsatilla are the best remedies —

For Boils, Arnica, Bryonia and Sulphur

For deafness, Belladonna, Pulsatilla, Vulcamara and Sulphur may be employed —

When the disease assumes the typhoid form Arnica, Rhus, Bryonia Nitric Acid, aconite Lycopodium Belladonna and Opium

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In the severe and dangerous sore throat which accompanies malignant scarlatina, the amygdalae being swollen into hard tumors, often as large as apples, attended with very difficult breathing, enlargement of the neighboring glands, permitting pulse, and sopor—Mure. Sol. Carb. Vegetabilis. Calc. Carb. and Kali Carb. will generally be found the most important remedies for the cure—

Belladonna is valuable as a ~~prophylactic~~ against pure scarlatina when epidemic and moreover greatly assists in modifying the character of the disease, in such individuals as do not wholly escape its attacks—